

A

LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

FEBRUARY 29TH AND MARCH 4TH, 1844.

ON THE

SUBJECT OF EDUCATION.

BY SAMUEL K. TALMAGE,
President of Oglethorpe University.

SAVANNAH:

PRESS OF LOCKE AND DAVIS.....BAY STREET.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

SAVANNAH, MARCH 7, 1844.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:—I have been instructed by the Board of Managers and the Committee of Arrangements, to express to you the unanimous thanks of the Georgia Historical Society, for the able and interesting Lecture delivered before them on the evening of the 29th ult. and 4th inst., and respectfully to request of you a copy for publication.

I am Reverend and Dear Sir,

With great respect and esteem,

Yours, very truly,

I. K. TEFFT,

Corresponding Secretary.

REV. S. K. TALMAGE,
Pulaski House.

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PULASKI HOUSE, MARCH 7, 1844.

DEAR SIR:—Your favor of to-day is before me, conveying the kind expressions of the Board of Managers and of the Committee of Arrangements of the Georgia Historical Society.

I comply with their request to furnish a copy of my Address for publication; not however without some hesitation, as it was not prepared for the public eye. Being on the eve of leaving the city, my engagements prohibit a needful review of the sheets.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great respect and esteem,

Your Obedient Servant.

SAMUEL K. TALMAGE.

I. K. TEFFT, Esq.

Corresponding Secretary

and Chairman Committee Arrangements.

ADDRESS.

*Gentlemen of the Historical Society,
And Respected Audience :*

It is with pleasure that I respond to the call of the Society I now address, and bring to it my humble tribute, that I may testify my strong sense of the value of this Association, and my earnest interest in its welfare and progress.

In all the annals of man, and in the history of her sister Colonies, perhaps no State, in looking back to her origin, has occasion, more than Georgia, for the exercise of an honest pride. Whilst the other States of this happy Union are distinguished as having their foundations laid in an ardent love of liberty and a just appreciation of the rights of conscience, Georgia can superadd to these motives the Spirit of Heaven-descended charity. Instead of serried warriors, with their blood-stained banners, to lay her foundations—instead of the spirit of cupidity and a reckless disregard to the rights of humanity, which have too often marked the progress of society, her sons can point to the spirit of their founders with proud exultation, and challenge the world for a purer origin. Philanthropy suggested the project; Philanthropy nerved the arm, and sustained the spirit that carried forward the enterprise. And we would be recreant to the claims which such a source imposes, did we not dwell upon it, and hold it up to posterity as a rich legacy of example. And where, more fittingly, shall such an Association convene to rehearse the deeds of disinterestedness and valor, than in this ancient City, where every spot is associated with some pleasant memorial of the past—its perilous enterprise, its heroic adventure, its patient endurance; on this spot, where the generous heart of OGLETHORPE often palpitated with intense anxiety, and where his brow was knit with care for the cherished object of his strong affection; on this spot, where the pure-minded SALTZBERGERS planted their tents to return thanks to God for his guiding hand amid the wild waste of waters; here,

where the conflict of the Colonial and Revolutionary struggles centred; and here, too, where the WESLEYS expended their pious efforts, and WHITEFIELD breathed his soul of fire—WHITEFIELD, the most gifted for popular effect of all orators, save DEMOSTHENES and CHATHAM, that ever charmed the human ear.

The past history of Georgia abounds, Gentlemen, with thrilling incidents, and especially when taken in connection with her resources and prospects, is abundantly worthy of being embalmed in a grateful remembrance. The story of her origin will yield a rich tribute to humanity, in the developement of the benevolence of her founder and his colleagues. Her resources and her climate are unsurpassed in any land under the broad expanse of Heaven. Her present position is so signally propitious, and her facilities for improvement so vast and multiplied, that every consideration of the past ought to be brought to bear upon us, to stimulate us to action. Sublimely inspiring is the memory of that past—cheering the present—animating the future prospect—if we prove not utterly derelict to our duty and unworthy of the destiny to which the unerring finger of Heaven seems to point.

Let those, then, who have habits and facilities for research, rescue from oblivion the noble sacrifices and perils incurred in founding the Colony—ennoble, in burning eloquence, the lofty enterprise of the first Colonists—and transmit their example on the historic page to a grateful posterity, to inspire them with sentiments worthy of such an origin. Others, I respectfully submit, might, under your patronage, employ their powers in developing the resources for future greatness, and bring their results to your shrine as a thank-offering for the past. Some might discourse on the natural history of a State teeming with the most luxuriant productions, botanical and mineral; some, on the geological remains which lie richly embedded along your coast. Whilst interspersing with, and giving variety to, the disclosures of the past, others might unfold the advantages of our commanding local position, and show how nature intended that the great valley of the Mississippi and the Mexican Gulf should be united to the Southern Atlantic through a door, which the God of nature has specially opened for our entrance. Others, again, like the Mantuan bard to the citizens of ancient Italy, might, by the eloquence of their strains, teach how to fertilize those lands we have been murdering with cruel hand, and thus arrest that destructive spirit of

emigration which clothes in frowns one of the brightest Edens on earth, and which retards the spirit of improvement that would else place Georgia on an enviable elevation among States and Nations. And others still, might profitably investigate the peculiar diseases of our climate, with the remedies nature has planted hard by, to relieve the ills of smitten humanity. Thus the Past and the Present, commingling their streams, could be made to bear with fertilizing power upon the Future. The sanguine expectations of the first settlers of Georgia were not the wild dreams of enthusiasm—for the facilities of progress are multiplied almost beyond parallel, and we have only to avail ourselves of them, and a vast work is done.

By the indulgence of those at whose call I have the honor to appear before you, I design to speak of the claims which the rising generation have upon us, that we may train them up worthily of the ancestors whose names they bear, and suitably to the times and the position they are called to occupy.

It is one of the strong proofs of the wisdom and the far-reaching discernment of the early emigrants to this land, and the first actors in the scene, that the cause of education commanded so much of their attention. The foundation of the best schools of learning in the States was laid during the Colonial period, and those institutions were all the result of private munificence. Nor was this subject overlooked in Georgia. Though WHITEFIELD'S early efforts in behalf of his fondly cherished BETHESDA at first only contemplated, by a noble charity, the corporeal wants of the unfriended and the lonely orphan, yet his views soon expanded into a plan for endowing a College on the model of Princeton. He never fully carried out his purpose, principally because the Government at home refused to grant a charter on those liberal principles, in the spirit of which his endowment was raised. Still, his efforts were not entirely in vain. This City, and through it the State, is to this day reaping the fruits of his efforts, and those of his coadjutors.

Mankind are, in the Providence of God, created and placed in a situation in which they must inevitably receive much from their fellows, and impart much in return. The rising generation catch their tone and character from their predecessors. Our race is sent into this world weak in body, plastic in mind and in heart, and imitative in spirit, that parents, teachers, guardians, rulers, may control and mould them. " 'Tis education forms the common mind." A nation

will rise or fall rapidly, accordingly as education advances or recedes. Seldom, if ever, does it stand still; elements are always at work to elevate or to prostrate. It is not in mental as in physical nature, that a fallow ground may become richer; constant culture is the price paid for the moral crop.

In view of what children may be made by education and example, an ancient Greek philosopher says: "*Let the child be viewed with awe.*" And indeed the rising generation should be looked upon as a race of giants in embryo; for it is only necessary that the adult educators of one generation should feel their powers and apply fully the means at their command, and their successors may be made giants, intellectually and morally. Let every child be regarded mentally as an infant HERCULES, slumbering in his cradle—let every expansion be given to his growing powers, and sublime may be the result. There is truth in the poet's paradox: "The child is father of the man."

The object of education is to make man intelligent, wise, useful, happy. In its enlarged and proper sense, it is to prepare him for action and felicity in two worlds. The intellect, the heart, and the body, are the subjects upon which to operate; there is an intimate connection between them all; they are mysteriously united, and mutually affect each other in a wonderful manner; their secret communings and reciprocal influences none can fully comprehend or explain.

When the infant opens his eyes upon the creation, he is surrounded by a world of wonders. As the faculties of the growing child are expanded and his powers developed, new and strange objects meet his eye and invite his attention at every turn. Above, beneath, around, within, if he is trained to observation, all teem with impenetrable phenomena. If the mind be left in ignorance, and not trained to thought, investigation and enquiry, when the first novelty of external objects is worn off by familiarity, and the glories of nature have become common by a superficial inspection, the mind will sink into a savage indifference. You may, perhaps, awaken a transient emotion in the mind of an untutored savage, when you introduce to his view some of the wonderful or sublime scenes of nature. Whilst he stands on the summit of some lofty mountain and gazes upon the wide landscape of hill and valley, and plain and forest, or as he views the rolling ocean, and sees its waves dashing against the shore, and

then again retiring in angry murmurs to the raging deep, there may arise some mysterious whisperings within him of a Divine power to be feared. When the earthquake causes the ground to tremble beneath him, or a dark eclipse shuts out the light of day from his vision, and throws its mournful pall across the earth, he may feel as though the Great Spirit were coming down with his tokens of wrath for those sins which disturb his conscience. But under ordinary circumstances he treads over the earth with the stupidity and indifference of the brute creation. His selfishness and his passions are all that stimulate him to action. He is like the blind man walking in darkness, dead to the beauties and the charms which glow around him.

But awaken attention and thought within the youthful mind—lead him to the Pierian fountain and let him imbibe its delicious draughts—conduct him to the temple of science—allure him to the charmed society of the Muses—unlock the treasures of knowledge—unfold the pages of history—introduce him to the acquaintance of the refined arts—let him know the properties, the relations, the laws, the constituent ingredients of the works of the moral, the intellectual and the physical world—and there is mentally a new creation begun.

As the youthful votary of science advances in life, and explores further the fields of nature and art, he finds new worlds of wonder perpetually arising before him; instead of approaching nearer the boundary, it seems to recede forever from him. Each successive advance up the hill of knowledge opens a wider and more extensive expanse to his view, and he finds that he can never reach the limit; his eye dances with joy, his heart is thrilled with delight, from new discoveries; but a shoreless, unsounded deep is still around and beneath him. Sir ISAAC NEWTON, after having “scanned the heavens and walked among the stars,” and listened to the music of the spheres, still felt, in view of the unexplored worlds of discovery yet untouched, “like a child picking up pebbles on the shores of the ocean.”

When the scholar surveys what has been written in history and sung in poetry, and what remains undescribed and unsung—when he lifts his telescope against the heavens, or with his retort and crucible in hand goes forth and puts nature to the torture to reveal her secrets—when he sees what the pencil and chisel have done to make the canvass speak and the cold marble breathe, and almost to realize the fabled imagery of peopling mute nature with living divinities—when he dives into the ocean of mind, and finds how much of

unexplored and unsatisfactory result is left, after all the investigations of the metaphysician, he feels that time is too short for his work. And yet a vast amount can be learned, and boundless progressive movements are yet to be made, and there must be a beginning and a progress. Others have started lower and later in life than he, and their names are indelibly engraven on the register of learning, and their works destined to live, the rich and common inheritance of all coming ages.

In childhood, the first object is, to exercise the senses and learn the qualities of those things on which life, and health, and freedom from pain depend. In early youth, a knowledge of letters and the simplest rudiments of science is all that can be infused into the mind. It is true, there are important moral lessons to be learned at this period. The child should be taught to exercise restraint of passions and prompt obedience to authority. It is vain to object to forestalling the mind with religious sentiments at that age, before the judgment has taken her seat on the throne, and before an intelligent choice can be made, lest prejudice may sway the mind and give an unjust bias, to the disadvantage of future correct decision. It would be well to consider that passion, and prejudice and error will have anticipated the earliest moral instruction; they are in the field beforehand, and habit is forming and will be soon found forging and riveting its chains; and the lessons taught at that age are written in letters of adamant. First impressions are often indelible—they prove *last* impressions. So that, if we wait for the expanding powers, there is a counteracting evil influence in advance of us. There is no estimating the dependance of after life and of eternity itself, on the bias, given to the heart and the mind at this early period. “Train up a child in the way he should go,” is Heaven’s unerring direction, “and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

In fostering affection and waking up a spirit of enquiry, the foundation is laid for the social habits and intellectual progress of all future time.

A great and good man has recorded in his memoirs the painful fact that, from being excluded from the family circle for five years of his early youth, without a moment’s interval, in pursuit of his education, he never could recover that filial and fraternal affection to his relatives, which conscience and judgment demanded of him. That pure fountain which spontaneously gushes up in the bosom of the family was stopped, and he could never renew the current. A distinguished

and successful votary of science bears testimony that, for his insatiable thirst for knowledge, and any degree of success to which he attained in its cultivation, he was indebted to the promptings of a sedulous mother, whose uniform answer to his enquiries was "Read my son, and you will know." Whilst the illustrious and unfortunate BYRON, in his description of one of his heroes, has revealed the secret of the waywardness of his own life, when he exclaims :

"And thus untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned."

And here comes in the nameless power of woman over our mental and moral destiny. She stands at the head of the fountain of life and directs its flowings to gladden and to fertilize, or to wither and to curse.

It has been a matter of dispute at what age the intellectual education should commence. To this enquiry, I would unhesitatingly answer, though in the face of high authority, that the mind should be drawn to study at the earliest point and to the greatest extent that can be employed, without weariness or disgust to the child. A love of learning can be infused at a very early period, and all that is then gained is clear gain, and brings its tribute of compound interest in after life.

The comparative advantages of a public and a private education, was formerly a much agitated question. There are some strong reasons alleged in favor of a private education, but it appears to me that those in favor of a public course greatly preponderate. The means and facilities of instruction will, of course, in a properly organized public institution, be more largely concentrated. The advantage of a wholesome emulation, (for the mind acts more powerfully under excitement and impulse,) the friendships formed by early association, and the experience and knowledge of mankind acquired even at that age, preparing for future life, must not be overlooked. It is true, there is no small hazard to be incurred to the morals and the sentiments, as many institutions are unfortunately now organised. And where a large collection of young men are congregated, during an age peculiarly exposed to temptation, the most critical and perilous period of human existence — when the passions are strong and the inexperience entire — and when the youth is excluded from all the wholesome restraints of the domestic roof; vicious example sometimes makes fearful havoc among the thoughtless and unstable. There are perils to be encountered (it must not be disguised) which

many a wreck of ruined youth has mournfully confirmed, as it floated by, mocking a father's hopes, blasting a mother's fondest anticipations, and withering her heart. Still it is believed that, with a rigid, vigilant and paternal care and supervision, backed by the constant appliance of moral and religious truth, the College may be made the abode of purity and refinement, and the costly sacrifice of hecatombs of victims may be saved, whilst the great benefits of public education are enjoyed.

The safest and best mode of College organization to promote to the fullest extent all the objects of a thorough and proper education, is a subject of enquiry worthy of the thoughtful consideration of the philanthropist. There is much wild and visionary speculation afloat in our land, even among able men, as to having a few great institutions of learning; the practical error of which arises from want of accurate observation of the facts and circumstances of the case. If we were driven to the alternative of choosing between having the *many* well educated, or a *few* profoundly instructed at the expense of leaving the multitude in comparative ignorance, the necessities of our republican institutions would seem to demand the former as the least evil. The age at which our youth are found at public institutions, and the demands of our republican forms of government, call for the extensive diffusion of a liberal education that does not require a long series of years of study. We need facilities for liberal instruction spread within local distances easily accessible, and demanding but moderate expenses to complete the course, only guarding against such a multiplication as will distract and divide patronage beyond the means of collecting adequate libraries, apparatus, museums, and competent boards of instruction.

A late experiment has been made in a sister State, in advance of the condition of learning in our infant nation, of a large Central College. The patronage of the Legislature was lavished upon the project, and the sanction of great names invoked to its aid. A corps of learned professors was imported from abroad, unacquainted with the genius of our people, to deliver their profound lectures to an audience of youth not qualified to appreciate or understand their refined and labored speculations, for want of more thorough research. The movement was a total failure, the plan was entirely changed.

To this day, Eton College and Harrow of England, I will venture to say, are far more efficient sources of discipline and enlightenment than Oxford and Cambridge, so far as the undergraduate is concerned.

In the latter places, much that is valuable in mental discipline is unlearned, whilst extravagance, dissipation and indolence are the prominent *accomplishments* gained. There can be no substantial superstructure without a broad and solid foundation, and it is to this that the practical man will look in all projects relating to the great cause of education. Let our institutions advance with the progress of the nation, without attempting to press forward a hot bed growth. Supply and demand should go together. I would not be understood, far from it, as an advocate for lowering the standard of education; but on the contrary, for elevating it as fast as it can practically be done. But a large shadow is less desirable than a substantial, valuable reality, of half its dimensions.

That the State is bound for her own interest, as well as for that of the citizen individually, to patronise and promote the cause of liberal education, admits not of a question. That she must sustain institutions of her own, or that many will remain uneducated, is equally clear. But the practical question is, after all, embarrassed with difficulties; legislative control is a very uncertain patron of letters; party spirit is often very unclassical in its tastes; sectarian bigotry often interferes with the best interests of public education; State institutions belonging equally to all parties, political and religious—all feel fully authorized to interfere, and in the strife, every thing that is sound and solid suffers. What is the prospect, think you, for literary appropriations in a Legislature, where an honorable Senator is able to correspond with his absent family only by the aid of an amanuensis, and where that family must needs call in a neighbor to read the letter for them; and where an honorable member of the other House is heard to say, “When he was a child, one man was enough to teach a school, but now the times are so altered, they must set up half a dozen lazy fellows to teach the boys.” But the serious obstacle is, the difficulty of the introduction of any definite, distinctive religious instruction. Where all are to be suited, none can be suited, and the pious parent must consent to leave the heart of his beloved child uninstructed. Lord BROUGHAM, after his splendid failure to advance education, has conceded, in his letter to the Bishop of London, that the Clergy must undertake the work. The Christian Church then must do far more, directly in the work of education; a work in which she has hitherto been criminally deficient. And the protection against a miserable spirit of *proselytism* must be found in a friendly rivalry, as to the patronage of letters, where those who

are the most liberal will find the largest support. Religion, mingling its restraints with enlightened mental instruction, is the safest disciplinarian. Inexperienced, enthusiastic, impassioned, thoughtless youth, exiled from the benign influence of the domestic circle in pursuit of education, from the sleepless vigilance of maternal affection, and from the wholesome restraints of the father's eye, requires the hallowed influences of religion to prevent the blessings of cultivated intellect from being purchased at the too dear sacrifice of prostrated morals and corrupted sentiments. Education, unaided by moral influences, is but the beautiful flower of a poisonous plant, more destructive as it is more attractive, spreading contagion all around, and filling the atmosphere with the principles of death.

Within a few years past, much has been said in favor of a system of manual labor in connection with mental instruction. The theory is a beautiful one; "*Mens sana in sano corpore*," is a good maxim. The idea of promoting health of body, together with practical industry and economy during a course of education, is pleasant to contemplate, and I am not surprised that this plan has found numerous advocates. But it is not every theory, however beautiful, that will endure the touch stone of experiment; experience is the test of truth. Out of a large number of institutions founded on this principle, in various parts of the country, some of them under circumstances highly favorable, not one, I believe I may say, has succeeded to the expectations of the projectors. The bodily system, that must be housed and relaxed a considerable portion of the day for study, cannot endure those alternations of heat and cold and storm, that must be encountered in any systematic plan of manual labor. The student requires some hours of relaxation from a regular routine of exercises, incompatible with the complicated and impracticable plan of combining regular study with labor. The occupations conflict too much with each other, to promote them both successfully.

The visionary theory must be abandoned, except as a charity for poor youth, who must forego the blessings of education, or labor to find means for a limited course. As a charitable institution, it deserves the consideration of benevolent men, who might in this way rescue many a poor and promising youth from ignorance. Here genius might be nursed, and raised from its lowly obscurity and made a blessing to the country—for true genius is a vigorous shoot, that needs only to catch a ray of light to enable it to burst its cements, and push its way to an enviable superiority over more favored

plants; and in a State where we have *thirty thousand adults*, who cannot read, with so little to hope from legislation on the subject, it might be well for the friends of education in this way to advance the public weal. It might not be amiss, also, to restrict the sacred privilege of the elective franchise to those who can at least read their votes—for to make the vote of an entirely unlettered man equal to that of a WASHINGTON or a FRANKLIN, sometimes potent to turn the scale and to decide the destiny of a people, is to hazard all to ignorant tools of designing politicians, and to the weak and willing instruments of contemptible demagogues.

Allow me to invite your attention to the appropriate studies of a College course. Perhaps our Colleges and Universities have adopted in the main the most judicious selection of subjects, to occupy the youthful mind in its training, to discipline the faculties, and lay the foundation for future practical life.

In looking over the course of study in various liberal institutions, but little difference is to be found, except in the order in which studies are pursued. The defect of some consists in taxing the mind prematurely, before its powers are sufficiently developed, and in postponing certain departments that might be called into practical use before the leaving the College walls. Using terms in their most general sense, the departments of knowledge may be comprehended under three great divisions, viz : Physical Science, Mental and Moral Science, and Philological Science. Under the first, *Physical Science*, I would embrace Mathematics, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, Natural History and Chemistry. The *second* explains itself. The third, *Philological Science*, includes the study of Languages and Belles-lettres. The value of mathematical studies for mental discipline, I believe, none deny; they tax the mind to close thought, severe application, and vigorous exercise of the judgment and the reasoning powers. This is eminently the case with the pure mathematics. As to the application of mixed mathematics to natural philosophy, it is indispensable to any tolerable knowledge of its principles; it is the only ladder by which we can climb up to the stars, or descend into the deep mysteries of the natural sciences; it is the language by which these sciences reveal their arcana to man. The value of mental and moral philosophy is equally admitted; it reveals to man the knowledge of the powers and faculties of his mind, and in its ethical rules, his duties as a social being and a moral agent. The claims of what I have denominated philological science,

are more controverted in this age of ultra utilitarianism, when money seems to be the great object of pursuit, and when Mammon seems to have set up his idol in almost every family—his altar in almost every heart.

In some old and respectable institutions of our country, the question has been gravely started, whether the studies of Latin and Greek ought not to be abandoned, or at least confined within a far more limited space. Against this opinion, I seriously protest, and boldly pronounce it one of the most *alarming literary heresies* of the age. Allow me to dwell for a moment on this subject. As a means of discipline for the mind, I am firmly persuaded that the study of languages, and especially of the ancient languages, calls into wholesome and harmonious exercise more of the intellectual powers than any other department of study; it exercises simultaneously the memory, the taste, the fancy, the judgment, and the powers of discrimination. The Greek and Latin are, in their structure, the most perfect languages in existence, and their writers have attained to the purest and most finished standards of uninspired composition. It is almost impossible to master the anomalous structure of modern languages, without that acquaintance with the principles of government that is to be gained alone from the ancient. To them we must resort for a proper and clear idea of the power and dependance of words. The ancient languages are the roots of the modern—the key to unlock the treasures of all the refined languages of this age. The nomenclature of the natural sciences, and the technical languages of the arts and learned professions, are borrowed from these sources. The inlets to the fountain of all historical information is found through the ancient languages. Without a knowledge of these, we must take our information on trust, and the authority of others. True, we have translations of many of their best works—but a good writer always suffers from translation. There is a power in language and style which discriminates the peculiar qualities of the mind, and which genius claims as its own. You may peruse the translation of an author, but it will be like culling a flower that has been dried on the stalk—the fragrance and the beautiful tints are gone—the undorned substance alone remains.

I repeat it, the most finished of uninspired productions on earth are those of the Greeks and Latins; they have gone to the *ultima Thule* of refinement, the perfection of style. The works of literature and art of the Grecians and Romans challenge our admiration; they

ever have been, and probably ever will remain, the standards and models of perfection. The overweening arrogance of many superficial moderns, in talking of the improvements and advancement of the modern world, of its inventions, and discoveries, and progress in literature, compared with all former times, would be rebuked and humbled by a fair examination.

In the *Arts*—the ancient cement, the Tyrian dye, their mode of embalming, their mechanical skill in elevating solid bodies of incredible weight, cannot now be equalled. An original portrait of SAPPHO was in existence in the time of the Emperor TRAJAN, seven hundred years after it was painted. Where is the artist now that can give such perpetuity to a painting? A few scores of years, and modern works are found stowed away in the attic with the worn out lumber.

I confess myself utterly at a loss to account for the profoundness and brilliancy of learning and of art in ancient Athens. The human mind must have been cast in a finer mould, and then all its powers kept on a stretch to have attained to their unapproachable superiority. Or they would seem to have been like a race of demigods, scorning the ordinary beaten track, and soaring into higher regions and on swifter pinions. It might have been partly owing to their games, exciting enthusiasm and a thirst for fame—partly to their climate and scenery, “their consecrated groves, their haunted streams, their flowery plains, their azure mountains,”—partly to the genius of the people, and their indomitable pains and study. But whatever be the cause, the fact is clear. To find the golden mines of literature, we must always repair to Greece and Rome, and especially to the former; for prostrate Athens, by the enchantment of her literature, conquered her haughty Roman conquerors, and gave laws to their minds—a noble triumph of letters over brute force. It was like the moral charms of woman, imparting strength to her weakness, subduing at her feet the superior physical power, and taming the rugged ferocity of the proud lords of creation. How ardently they labored, we may learn by reading the profound criticisms of their five great Belles-lettres writers—ARISTOTLE, CICERO, DIONYSIUS of Halicarnassus, LONGINUS, and QUINTILIAN.

Would you have an instance of the extent and the results of the labors of the ancients? A stranger in visiting ancient Athens, might have had his attention drawn to a group of thoughtless children, amusing themselves in the street; his special notice is attracted to

one youth more unpromising than the rest — a lisping, stammering, short-breathed boy — in every motion hideously, almost spasmodically contracting his muscles, and with a constitutional infirmity amounting almost to deformity. The stranger departs, with sympathy for the poor youth, who, if he lives, will afford sport and ridicule to his neighbors, and never be heard of, or remembered, but as a *lusus naturæ*. At an interval of thirty years, that stranger revisits Athens. The city is all in tumult; the anxious, agitated crowd are assembled, hanging spell-bound upon the lips of the Grecian Orator, as he scathes by the lightnings, and stupifies by the thunders of his eloquence, the partisans of PHILIP. That speaker, whose spirit-moving strains and whose soul of fire kindles every heart into a consuming flame, is the same ignoble youth who was never to have been heard of without pity, but whose name is now, in the ends of the earth, familiar as a household word — incorporated into every language as a synonyme for eloquence, and whose fame is engraven in letters of adamant on the register of immortality.

How shall we account for this mental phenomenon? The problem is solved in the language of the classic poet: "*Improbis labor omnia vincit*" — or by the higher authority of Heaven's inspired record: "Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

In *Poetry*—to pass by HOMER and HESIOD—where else can you find the deep breathing pathos of SAPPHO, the graceful ease of ANACREON, the burning sublimity of PINDAR, the gentle sweetness of THEOCRITUS, the glowing fervour of ÆSCHYLUS, the impassioned grandeur of SOPHOCLES and EURIPIDES, the melting tenderness of MENANDER, of whom one beautifully says: "The lyre he touched, was formed of the strings of the human heart?" To these questions I unhesitatingly reply, that beyond the limits of the Sacred Scriptures, you will nowhere find these qualities, in all the annals of uninspired literature.

In *Philosophy*—visit in imagination ancient Athens, go to the Academy of Plato, and then to the Lyceum of Aristotle, and then to the Portico of Zeno, and then wander along the banks of the Ilyssus, and see those groves crowded with philosophers and their thousands of disciples, and listen to their sage precepts. Who would not labor to acquire an intimate knowledge of that refined language, which was the medium of communication and the vehicle of thought to these giant minds. It is not surprising that CATO

should have been converted from his hostility to every thing Greek, and have applied himself, in his old age, to the study of a language so rich in lessons of wisdom and virtue.

In the *Fine Arts*—in *sculpture*, the inimitable PHIDIAS has left all modern artists at an unapproachable distance behind; he breathed his very soul into the inanimate material. With a mind heaving with deep emotion, and big with lofty conceptions, and thoughts all on fire, he seized the chisel, and, as if by the touch of a magician's wand, the cold marble became instinct with impassioned life, and glowed with inspiration. The Elgin monuments in England contain specimens of the skill of PHIDIAS that cannot be equalled. MICHAEL ANGELO, the wonder of the fifteenth century, and the glory of Italy, of modern artists, has approached nearest to PHIDIAS, but though intoxicated to madness with the love of his enchanting art, his productions are unnatural in the comparison.

In *Architecture*—the stately Doric, the chaste Ionic, the luxuriant and gorgeous Corinthian orders of Greece, are now the admiration of the world, and will doubtless ever stand confessed the model and perfection of the art.

In *Painting*—the productions of ZEUXIS and APELLES, judging from the accounts of their intoxicating and more than oratorical influence on the crowds they drew around them, must have been finished specimens of absolute perfection. The *Helen* of the former was the wonder of the age. To finish the picture, ZEUXIS procured six of the most beautiful maidens from Crotona to sit for the face, from a combination of whose beauties he sought to embody ideal perfection. One of them, from diffidence, was unwilling to unveil her face before him. When the multitude crowded around to gaze upon the picture, and the enthusiastic shouts of admiration rent the air, the painter himself was the only dissatisfied spectator; his exclamation was, "*Oh, for the blush of the sixth maiden!*" Such was his exquisite sense of the ludicrous, that he fell a victim to the power of his own pencil; he died in a convulsion of laughter at the sight of the picture of a grotesque old woman he had painted. You are all familiar with the incident of the painted grapes of APELLES. When the birds alighted on the picture to peck the fruit, the painter was mortified that the boy bearing the basket of fruit was not *striking* enough to frighten the birds away. He exposed his pictures to the public, and invited general criticism, that all their faults might be corrected. An humble cobbler ventured to criticise a foot, which the

painter altered at his suggestion; when the mechanic, by this piece of deference, was emboldened to make other criticisms, the painter gave a reply which is said to be the origin of the Latin proverb: "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam.*"

I have adverted to these improvements in the arts of the ancients to shew that, if we are to repair to them at this day as models in the fine arts, we should exhibit no less deference to their *language* and *style*, in which they labored with equal industry and success, and which are far more important subjects for attention. Indeed, it admits of a serious question, whether without a constant familiarity with these unchanging standards, any modern language would not rapidly decline into *provincialisms, vulgarisms and barbarisms*. Few men in modern days have been found to excel as eloquent writers or speakers who have not been classical scholars. SHAKESPEARE, BURNS, FRANKLIN, and PATRICK HENRY have been adduced as examples to show what men could accomplish without a knowledge of ancient languages; but they are only *exceptions*, to make the very best of the objection. As to SHAKESPEARE, it would appear that he had some knowledge of Greek, as he exhibits a familiarity with portions of Grecian literature, that seem never to have been translated in his day; and the superiority of the others might, and doubtless would have been much greater, had they been aided by classical learning.

The value of classical literature is greatly enhanced, from the consideration that we must repair to Greece and Rome, as to the fountains and depositories of a vast proportion of the knowledge we gain of *ancient history*. In searching for the annals of history, and the sources of knowledge on this subject, we are met by the painful fact, that many of the most interesting productions have been obliterated by the waste of time. Indeed, as all early written documents could be preserved only in the fugitive form of manuscript, it is wonderful that so much has escaped the casualties that were encountered, and has been transmitted to so late an age. Fire, and sword, and superstition, and the devastating hand of ages, and the ignorance of men, have made fearful inroads and ravages upon the productions of mind; they have obliterated much, and given us only a glimpse of more, just serving to awaken a curiosity which can never be fully satisfied. Like the leaves of the Sybil, their value is the more enhanced, in porportion as their number is diminished.

The investigation of the history of early manuscripts is full of painful interest. The writings of ARISTOTLE were found with the grand-

son of one of his disciples, and purchased by a Roman, and deposited in a mutilated form in a Roman library, in the best days of the Republic. They came well nigh being finally lost amidst the lumber of manuscripts in a later day in modern Italy, and were only accidentally saved and brought to light. The whole of the writings of LIVY, and also those of VARRO, appear to have been in existence in the days of PETRARCH, and were seen by him. Now, after ransacking the whole world, only thirty-five of the one hundred and forty books of LIVY are to be found; and as to VARRO—the “walking library,” and contemporary of CICERO—who wrote five hundred volumes and seven hundred lives of distinguished Romans, and from whom PLINY borrowed largely in the compilation of his profound Natural History—scarcely a fragment of VARRO is now to be found. CICERO—the orator, statesman, philosopher, and scholar—probably the most accomplished man upon whom the sun ever shone, gained his wonderful stores of knowledge by devoting his days and nights to VARRO’s admirable library of manuscripts gathered from Greece.

Some of the early historians, whose writings would have poured a flood of light on the dark annals of antiquity, have entirely disappeared, except so far as a few fragments have been incorporated into the works of others. SANCHONIATHO, the Phœnician, who wrote a history of his country, is lost—a work of which, PORPHYRY gives us just enough to enable us to realize the loss the world has sustained. MANETHO, the Egyptian, is not to be found, and the light which is lost to the world by the disappearance of his history of Egypt, is poorly compensated by what JOSEPHUS and EUSEBIUS have gleaned from his pages. Berosus, the Babylonian, and great historian of Chaldea, is represented to the world only by a few meagre fragments, which JOSEPHUS has rescued from his works. The mysterious splendors of the HETRUSCI, a wonderful people of ancient Italy, the remains of whose refinement are now to be found only in some English Cabinets and the Museum of the Vatican, and whose curious relics amaze the antiquarian, must now remain forever a wonder to the world. The stately monuments of Egyptian Thebes, with her hundred gates—that classic land “where MOSES meditated, and PLATO wandered, and EUCLID composed his elements”—must ever remain a sealed book; her monumental ruins lie scattered upon the earth like a prostrate forest, and the voice of her unexplored and inexplicable antiquities rolls solemnly over us like thunder tones, demonstrating the impotence of man to rescue his works from oblivion and ruin.

For the most authentic records of antiquity, next to the Sacred Scriptures, we are mainly indebted to HERODOTUS, THUCYDIDES, XENOPHON, and PLUTARCH. HERODOTUS, after travelling to an incredible extent, and the most laborious and pains-taking research, wrote the history of the Lydians, Ionians, Lycians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks and Macedonians. "His style is gay and splendid, free and flowing;" his accuracy and fidelity are not questioned, and the correctness of his geographical delineations is receiving constant confirmation from modern discoveries. THUCYDIDES is the great historian of the Peloponnesian war, and carries back his history to the close of that of HERODOTUS. "He is grave, intelligent, judicious and exact;" his energy and brevity sometimes render his style harsh and obscure. He was stimulated to an ambition for historical fame, and excited even to weeping, when a youth of fifteen, by hearing HERODOTUS recite his histories to enraptured crowds at the Olympic games. Of PLUTARCH, that prince of biographers, who throws an immense flood of light on contemporaneous history, a profound critic and classical scholar has said, if every work of ancient profane history was doomed to destruction but one, and he had his choice of selection, that one should be PLUTARCH'S *Lives*. Of XENOPHON, I need not speak, whose smooth and mellifluous periods have made him every where a favorite author.

The other historians, who treat of these early times, are DIOGENES, LAERTIUS, OROSIUS, ARRIAN, DIODORUS SICULUS, CORNELIUS NEPOS, and JUSTIN.

The ancient historic Muse called to the aid of the Roman Empire a splendid galaxy of talent, learning and research, to portray her glories and to transmit her fame to posterity. The principal early historians to whom the moderns are indebted for their data on the subject of Rome, are (besides some of those already mentioned,) DIONYSIUS of Halicarnassus, POLYBIUS, SALLUST, CÆSAR, SUETONIUS, TACITUS, and DION CASSIUS. To complete very nearly the list of ancient historians of any repute, I have only to add the names of APPIAN, QUINTUS CURTIUS, and VELLEIUS PATERCULUS.

It is fortunate for history, that whilst a large proportion of every one of the most distinguished of these authors is lost, a sufficient portion of each one is retained to cover almost every point of Roman history, and to illustrate it to a considerable degree of satisfaction.

DIONYSIUS, in the age of AUGUSTUS, spent twenty-four years in Rome, searching all the Greek and Latin authors to prepare a history

of Rome, which appeared in twenty-four books, called Roman Antiquities, only eleven of which are extant containing the history of the Kings. DIODORUS SICULUS, of the same age, spent thirty years in compiling a historical Library—fifteen of the forty books of which are all that are now to be found. POLYBIUS wrote a general history in forty books, five of which remain, besides a meagre epitome of the rest, compiled in the tenth century. He was carried a hostage to Rome, and being detained there for seventeen years, had a fine opportunity to lay in those wonderful stores of knowledge which are so remarkable in what remains of his writings. LIVY is supposed to have copied and incorporated into his Latin History whole books *verbatim* from the original Greek of POLYBIUS — and it is not to his credit that, after his plagiarisms, he simply speaks of the author as “*haudquaquam auctor spernendus*.” BRUTUS, the murderer of CÆSAR, is said often to have retired from the field of battle to his tent, to be absorbed in the pages of POLYBIUS describing his ancestors. Still, LIVY is a beautiful writer, abounding in elegant narrative and useful reflections. POLYBIUS and TACITUS, are perhaps the most remarkable of ancient historians for profoundness and intimate knowledge of human nature. The last of the ancient historians, and the most elegant in style of his age, was DION CASSIUS, who died A. D. 230; he spent ten years in collecting materials, and twelve years in preparing his eighty books, twenty only of which remain in a mutilated form, besides a meagre epitome compiled by XIPHILUS during the dark ages.

It was from the ancients that mediæval Italy, with her poets, historians, painters and scholars, borrowed her literature — Italy! that bright land which caught the expiring rays of science, and reflected them over Europe, lighting up a flood of glory when darkness had long brooded over the face of the deep.

Such is a glance at the treasures of Greece and Rome. Their works embody ages of thought and research, conveyed in the most perfect dialects ever spoken, and clothed in a style of elegance and beauty that human pen has never equalled. If parents had only a more correct conception of these ancient store-houses of wisdom, and these treasuries of mental discipline, more seldom would the message be conveyed to teachers: “I want my son to be made a mathematician, chemist, natural philosopher; but as to the useless lumber of Greek and Latin, I care not to have his time wasted upon it.”

I had wished, on this occasion, to advert to some other topics, but the time already occupied admonishes me to close. I will only add that there is an alarming process of corruption going on in this country, in the adulteration of the English language, which demands a serious note of warning and rebuke. The innovations upon our mother-tongue are such, that if not speedily arrested, we shall soon require a glossary to enable us to appreciate the eloquent strains, drawn from the well of English undefiled, in which MILTON and SHAKESPEARE, and DRYDEN and POPE, have sung, and ADDISON and MACAULEY, have so beautifully discoursed. At the hazard of the charge of rashness from certain quarters, I will venture to say that NOAH WEBSTER, in canonizing hundreds of provincialisms and barbarisms, by inserting them in his *American Dictionary*, has committed an outrage on the Saxon tongue—and the most alarming feature of the case is, that distinguished patrons of letters in the Northern Colleges have lent the sanction of their names to his unauthorized production. If it is not beneath the dignity of the occasion to specify a few of the strange words that are beginning to straggle and obtrude their unlawful forms, even into judicial decisions and grave senatorial debates, I would say, that the barbarous words, *lengthy* for lengthened, *jeopardize* for jeopard, *talented* for almost any thing, *illy*, as an adverb, for ill, *progress*, as a verb, for advance, &c., should be scouted from the circles of the refined. I trust a barrier will be raised, in the South at least, against these lawless corruptions, and that, by the common consent of our scholars, these and similar unauthorized and unwarrantable terms will never be permitted to cross MASON and DIXON'S Line, to poison and corrupt our mother tongue.

But I must close, and in doing so, I owe an apology to this Society for whatever of inappropriateness this address contains, as there is no other general association of liberal and enlightened men in the State, to whose protection to commend these important topics. May the Historical Society long live and flourish, to enlighten the sons of Georgia as to the past, and to reflect the hallowed light of that past on their future pathway to the fame and renown which the great and generous OGLETHORPE so fondly anticipated for the Colony. May it prove, under a benignant Providence, a pillar of cloud in the day of prosperity to shade and to guide—a pillar of fire in the night season of depression and gloom, to illuminate and cheer.

